



Our First VERT USA Installation

Community College Denver

Vertual installed their first VERT system at Community College Denver (CCD) Lowry in August 2010. Two months later when Phyllis DeBaun was asked by a potential VERT customer for her views on VERT, Phyllis, who has been a therapist for thirty years and is now the Radiation Therapy Program Director at CCD, replied as follows



COMMUNITY
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“To answer your first question **“What do I think of VERT?”** It is amazing!!! The things I can teach students now vs. when I had nothing other than a textbook and my imagination is phenomenal. It can do everything and what it can't they are working on developing in order for the US to benefit as much as the UK therapy students.



Phyllis DeBaun

Second question, **“Are we up and running?”** Yes, and running we are! I can't learn fast enough the knowledge of ALL that VERT can do. What can I say, but it is the best money your institution could ever spend on your therapy program in regards to training therapist. The students can't spend enough time on it, they are begging for more literally. Imagine that students asking for more time at school to be trained, I LOVE IT! We had them spend the first four weeks of the semester learning Radiation Therapy 101 I called it. The basic terminology in the therapy world and all the acronyms we teach them that sound so foreign. Something we take for granted such as Source to Surface Distance (SSD) or Source to Axis Distance (SAD), and be able to show them the difference. Not to mention ISOCENTER, they knew the basic concept by the end of the first session. Granted it took a few more sessions for them to be proficient at shifts that are typically prescribed by the physician but they got it, and really understood what I was saying. I didn't get that blank stare that we as instructors sometimes see when trying to get them to understand us. We know what we are trying to say why don't they right?

We actually had them moving the accelerator the first day, turning room lights on and off, using the lasers and aligning the beam and setting up to skin marks. The very first day!

I was actually asked by one of my students “How did the students understand this without this technology to teach them?” Oh, if they only knew. I was using the radiology lab at the college to simulate the field light, a student brought in a baby doll, I drew a three point set up on the doll and we aimed the x-ray field light to the Central Axis (CAX) and pretended a lot.

Third question and the probably the most important one you would like answered, **“How much did it cost and how I obtained funding?”** I knew that VERT was the future of education for

radiation therapy. With all the technological advances, we are required to teach the students so much more in so little time. When I first approached the Dean of Health Sciences and shared that an Immersive System with all the Bells & Whistles (rear projection that doesn't have shadows and ability to track the student similar to the Wii game technology) was a little under \$500,000 she swallowed, took a deep sigh and replied, "that would be a good goal for the future of the program someday", with an emphasis on someday. I became educated on obtaining Grant Funding through all kinds of sources but the one that proved successful for me was the "Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006". I've since learned that this government funding is available to postsecondary educational institutions nationwide. I'll share with anyone who will listen how "***The little college that could and did***" obtain funding in these economic times to purchase this great system. ...

Needless to say we didn't get an Immersive System with all the bells and whistles but we did get the Seminar VERT and it is AWESOME! It has a front projection system and no tracking but, we do not find this to be a hindrance at all. We also purchased licenses for two laptops to train staff and develop lesson plans with. ... Dependent upon the software and type of system you order depends on the cost and Vertual worked with CCD to help us acquire a quality system



Seminar VERT at Community College Denver

within the minimal budget that CCD had to purchase their system. A considerable portion of the VERT funding came from Perkins, as the Perkins disbursement is divided amongst the entire college. ... The remainder of funding for VERT was obtained from a onetime budget request from General Funds at the College with the goal of offering Continuing Education credit for registered therapist as well with VERT.

Along that note, I must share, when Vertual came to CCD to demonstrate the VERT System, we recorded the session to share with the college administration. So for the budget request my wonderful dean and the IT specialist had that demo playing in the background (to my surprise) on a screen and I narrated what was happening. That made an impression! As you know, there are few who aren't affected by cancer in some way and when I explained my teaching with tape and baby dolls vs. a real simulator such that other health science programs had, for example nursing and x-ray. They got the point just how much harm students could do without state of the art teaching! Plus, it is portable in the sense of its all computers, projectors and screens. No room needing to be built to house an antiquated simulator. Just a classroom it's as simple as that.

... VERT is as good as they say it is and very straight forward in its operation if you have a background in Radiation Therapy!"

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